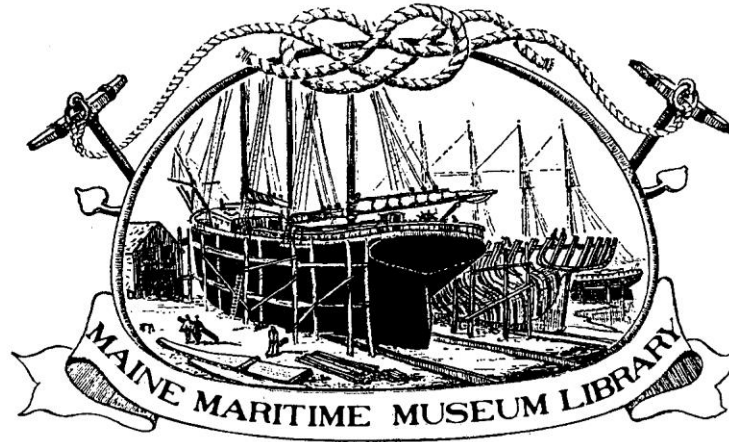


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**Inventory for
Manuscript Collection
MS - 19**

**John Fox Papers
1813-1838**

by
Elisabeth Meier
February 2018

One box
0.4 linear feet
Accession no. 71.151.2

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Abstract

John Fox (1785-1852)

Papers, 1813-1838

1 box

Merchant and ship-owner from Portland, Maine

This collection contains business and personal papers from John Fox (1785-1852), a Portland merchant and ship-owner. The majority of the collection consists of letters, accounts, bills of lading, and receipts related to Fox's involvement in coastal shipping and the Caribbean sugar, European wine, and Atlantic cotton trades. The remaining bills and letters deal with Fox's family, household purchases, and personal and civic affairs.

Purchased with money from the Davenport Fund.

MS-019. Accession #71.151.2.

Finding aid (folder level control) in repository.

Added entries—persons:

Allen, W.W., Captain

Fox, Edward (1815-1881)

Fox, John (1785-1852)

Hill, Ebenezer, Captain

Hood, Daniel, Captain

Martin, Clement, Captain

Oxnard, Stephen, Captain

Thomas, William W., Captain

Waterhouse, Samuel, Captain

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):

Amazon (brig)

Canal National Bank

Cora (two-mast schooner)

Fair American (brig)

Fountain (brig)

Maine (brig)

Mt. Vernon (schooner)

Notary (sloop)

Superior (brig)

Warren (brig)

Added entries—key terms:

Accounts

Coastwise shipping

Cotton trade

Fish trade

Merchant ships

Letters

Lumber trade

Portland (ME)

Price indexes
Ship captains
Sugar trade
West Indies trade
Wine trade

Acquisition

This collection was purchased with money provided by the Davenport Fund in 1971.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on this collection.

Physical Condition

Most of the documents are in good condition. Some are splitting badly along old folds. Many of the letters from 1830 show old water damage, but are still legible.

Processing Notes

There is a visible original order in this collection, though it is unclear how much it was augmented by initial processing in the 1980s. John Fox evidently filed his letters and bills by year, mixing personal and business items. This collection contains, with Fox's original labels, letters received in 1821, 1822, and 1830, and bills settled in 1828. The documents from other years are scattered, but have been arranged along the same principles.

Historical Note

John Fox (1785-1852) was the son of a prominent family of Portland, Maine. His father, also named John Fox (1749-1795), served as a town selectman, Portland's representative to the Massachusetts General Court, and a delegate to the US Constitutional Convention. The younger John Fox, however, was principally concerned with business.

Fox was both a merchant and a ship-owner, and was involved in most facets of the Atlantic marketplace. He traded in Maine, Boston, New York, and the Chesapeake for lumber, fish, flour, and salt meat. Having collected these cargoes in Portland, he then dispatched them to the Caribbean in exchange for sugar, coffee, and cocoa, or, occasionally, to southern Europe for wine. By the late 1820s, Fox's vessels were also starting to carry cotton from the Gulf of Mexico to Liverpool. For the most part, John Fox managed this business in his own name, although he occasionally combined with his brother Charles or other local merchants.

Although Fox was never as publically engaged as his father, he was involved in several civic improvement projects in Portland, including founding a school and building the Cumberland and Oxford Canal, which made it possible to float lumber from Sebago Lake to the city. When the Canal National Bank was incorporated in 1825 to help finance the project, Fox served as one of the bank's first presidents.

In 1813, John Fox married Lucy Jones Oxnard (1793-1875), also of Portland. The couple had five children: Edward, Lucy A., Octavia, Frederick, and John. Edward (1815-1881), who attended Exeter and Harvard, later became a lawyer and a U.S. District Court judge in Portland.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains the business and personal papers of Portland merchant John Fox (1785-1852). The majority of the collection is related to business, chronicling Fox's activities as both merchant and ship-owner between 1820 and 1833. Lengthy letters from ship captains give detailed accounts of the market in various ports in the United States, the Caribbean, and Europe, in addition to describing routine ship maintenance and, occasionally, the particulars of doing business. Letters from merchants in the same ports give similar information from a different perspective. Both types of letters are often accompanied by accounts, bills of lading, or lists of prices current. Additionally, bills, receipts, and accounts document Fox's work in assembling and selling cargoes in Maine and Boston.

Outside the normal thread of Fox's business, there is a brief series of letters discussing the seizure of the schooner *Cora* in Hampton Roads in 1821 and Fox's efforts to regain his title to the vessel. There are also a few scattered papers related to the Canal National Bank.

The personal papers cover a longer period of time, from 1813 to 1838, but are less complete. There are a few personal letters, mostly related to family affairs, the Portland school, and other civic pursuits. A series of notes from Fox's son, Edward, gives a window into student life at Exeter and Harvard in the late 1820s. The majority of the personal papers, however, are in the form of bills and receipts for household goods, food and drink, tuition, and construction.

Box and Folder List

Note: out of respect for John Fox's personal filing system, business and personal papers have not been separated. Letters and accounts related to individual vessels are likewise mixed with the remaining collection.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Incoming letters, December 29, 1820 – October 12, 1821
	2	Incoming letters, November 26, 1821 – December 28, 1821
	3	Incoming letters, January 5, 1822 – April 6, 1822
	4	Incoming letters, April 10, 1822 – June 20, 1822
	5	Incoming letters, June 22, 1822 – December 20, 1822
	6	Incoming letters, November 24, 1829 – March 27, 1830
	7	Incoming letters, March 28, 1830 – May 10, 1830
	8	Incoming letters, May 12, 1830 – July 2, 1830
	9	Incoming letters, July 7, 1830 – September 27, 1830
	10	Incoming letters, September 29, 1830 – January 11, 1831
	11	Incoming letters, 1832-1833
	12	Incoming letters, undated
	13	Bills and accounts, 1813-1821
	14	Bills and accounts, 1825-1827
	15	Bills and accounts, December 28, 1827 – March 12, 1828
	16	Bills and accounts, March 25, 1828 – July 19, 1828
	17	Bills and accounts, July 23, 1828 – October 2, 1828
	18	Bills and accounts, October 26, 1828 – December 31, 1828
	19	Bills and accounts, 1829-1830
	20	Bills and accounts, 1836
	21	Bills and accounts, January 4, 1837 – September 7, 1837
	22	Bills and accounts, September 9, 1837 – August 20, 1838